

# Some lawmakers challenge court over McCleary sanctions

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**Nineteen senators have written a letter saying that the Washington state Supreme Court has overstepped its authority by ordering the state to pay sanctions because of lack of progress on an education funding plan.**

By [The Associated Press](#)

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OLYMPIA, Wash. — Nineteen senators have written a letter saying that the Washington state Supreme Court has overstepped its authority by ordering the state to pay sanctions because of lack of progress on an education funding plan.

The letter, signed by 18 Republicans and one Democrat who caucuses with them, was sent to Democratic and Republican leaders in the House, and Senate Democratic leadership. It argues that the court's order last week that the state set aside \$100,000 a day in a segregated education account violates not only the state constitution, but the federal constitution as well.

The letter urges lawmakers to consider the “political, legal, and constitutional responses” to what it says is a challenge to the legislative role.

In response, Gov. Jay Inslee issued a statement saying that Senate Republicans “should not be looking for a constitutional crisis, they should be looking for an education solution.”

The statement said Inslee talked with legislative leaders in both caucuses in the House and Senate on Friday, and asked each to appoint members for a bipartisan working group to address the Supreme Court's concerns.

“Not all of the caucuses agreed to do so,” he said.

Rep. Ross Hunter, D-Medina, also posted a response on his website, saying: “If Republicans want to change the system to avoid this kind of conflict they can either remove the ability to have the court enforce the basic tenets of the constitution, or they can remove the paramount duty clause. I don’t support either, and neither will the voters.”

Last week’s ruling was the latest development in a long-running impasse between lawmakers and the justices, who in 2012 ruled that the state is failing to meet its constitutional duty to pay for the cost of basic education for its 1 million schoolchildren.